

Assignment #4 - "Library Research"

Goal

Gain familiarity with the literature search tools available to psychologists and to use these tools to find and evaluate relevant literature.

Task

Imagine that you are a therapist working in private practice. You are seeing a client who is struggling to cope with parenting a child who has recently been diagnosed with Autism. Your client, who typically comes to sessions appearing depressed and hopeless about her situation, arrives seeming quite happy. She reports that she was reading the newspaper when she came across an article explaining an intervention, Facilitated Communication (FC), used to treat Autism. She hands you the following article:

"Jane is a 13 year-old girl who has spent almost the entire duration of her young life trapped in her own mind, unable to express her thoughts and emotions to anyone, including the parents that love her and want nothing more than to connect with their daughter. Jane has a condition that all too commonly devastates families everywhere and proves to be one of the most difficult psychological disorders to cope with. Jane was diagnosed with Autism at age 3. Throughout her life Jane has been unable to speak, has difficulty navigating her environment and does not connect emotionally with anyone, including her parents and older sister. To the outside observer, Jane lives in complete isolation, without any ability to interact socially. Obviously this condition has completely overwhelmed her parents who have taken her to countless professionals and have tried anything and everything that has been recommended to them, but nothing has worked. That is until 3 months ago when Jane's mother, on the recommendation of a coworker she barely knew, took Jane to see an individual practicing Facilitated Communication (FC). FC is an intervention that allows individuals who are unable to directly communicate to speak to others by typing out phrases on a keyboard with the assistance of a trained communicator. The communicator serves only as an "assistive device," holding the patient's arm and hand to provide the physical support necessary to allow the patient to use a keyboard and type out words and phrases. With this help, the patient, who is normally unable to communicate at all, becomes able to answer questions, hold conversations and express his/her innermost thoughts through typing. In a matter of a few sessions of FC, Jane's mother reports that she began talking to her daughter for the first time in 13 years. She was able to ask her questions, understand her thoughts and feelings and build a relationship with someone that had been locked in her own mind for her entire life. It is discoveries like this that give hope to everyone who suffers or knows someone suffering from a severe illness and reminds us all that there are miracles."

Your client asks your opinion of FC and whether this will be the answer to all her prayers. You tell her that you have never heard of this technique but you will do some research and let her know what you find.

Your task is to research FC and gather information about the effectiveness of FC in the treatment of autism. You will use this information to form conclusions about the overall effectiveness of this intervention and present recommendations to your client about whether or not to pursue FC for her daughter.

Specifically, you will need to complete the following steps:

- 2) Find a total of three articles on the effectiveness of FC, one satisfying each of the following:**
 - a. An article located using a PSYC INFO or Web of Science search**
 - b. A popular press report (e.g., newspaper, magazine, website, etc.)**
 - c. An article/statement describing the official opinion of your profession regarding the use of FC.**

- 3) For each of the three articles, complete the following:**
 - a. Provide a brief summary**
 - b. Identify the source of the article**
 - c. Identify the intended audience**
 - d. Identify the author's/source's qualifications**
 - e. Identify the motive of the article (i.e. what is the author trying to achieve by writing the piece?)**

- 4) Brief your client on your findings.**
 - a. Indicate what information you found**
 - b. Provide your opinion regarding the efficacy of FC, using the information you gathered to support this opinion.**
 - c. Make specific recommendations to your client about how she should proceed.**